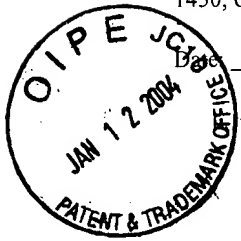


**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §1.8**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on:



*1-6-04*

By: *[Signature]*

Signature of Person Depositing First Class Mail

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND  
TRADEMARK OFFICE**

*UTILITY PATENT*

Applicant:	Kruse et al.	Docket No.:	27153.2400
Serial No.:	09/868,283	Art Unit:	1742
Filed:	June 15, 2001	Examiner:	W. Leader
Title:	METHOD FOR DARKENING A SUPERFICIAL LAYER WHICH CONTAINS ZINC AND WHICH IS OF A MATERIAL PIECE	Confirmation No.:	8549

**RESPONSE**

Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment  
Commissioner of Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed October 8, 2003, Applicant responds as follows:

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 6 of this paper.